

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



**FISCAL NOTE**

**HB 597 - SB 466**

February 25, 2021

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Authorizes the use of photo identification cards issued by an accredited postsecondary institution in this state for voting purposes.

Permits any registered Tennessee voter to vote absentee for any reason after providing a certification as to the identity of the voter in the application for a ballot; requires an absentee ballot to be counted for the election in which the ballot is cast; deletes the requirement that a voter who registers by mail must vote the first time in person.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Increase State Expenditures –**

**\$917,200/FY23-24 and Every Four Years Thereafter**

**Increase Local Expenditures –**

**\$917,200/FY21-22 and Every Four Years Thereafter\***

**\$1,834,500/FY22-23 and Every Two Years Thereafter\***

**Assumptions:**

- The proposed legislation broadens acceptable forms of photo identification which can be utilized for voting purposes to include those issued by accredited postsecondary institutions of Tennessee.
- Workers at polling locations will not need a significant amount of training to correctly identify valid school-issued identification cards.
- Authorizing students to use their school-issued identification card for voting purposes will have no significant fiscal impact on state or local government.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-201, only certain registered voters are permitted to vote by absentee ballot.
- The proposed legislation would authorize all registered voters to vote via absentee ballot.
- County election commissions will receive a greater number of requests for absentee ballots as a result of this legislation; however, costs to each county will vary based on the number of registered voters.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202(a), a voter who desires to vote absentee shall request an absentee ballot by submission of an application containing certain identifying information of the voter as well as a document that includes the voter's signature.

- Some county election commission offices will require additional staff for verifying the signature and identifying information of the voter provided on the application and absentee ballot, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-6-202(b) – (g).
- There will also be an increase in local expenditures for postage costs associated with mailing an absentee ballot to a qualified voter who has completed an application.
- Based on information previously provided by the Division of Elections, a poll of counties indicates an increase in local expenditures statewide of \$917,237 per election, for increased staffing and postage costs.
- Such absentee ballots will only be cast in years of a primary, general, or runoff election. Therefore, in FY22-23 and every two years thereafter, there will be a mandatory increase in local expenditures of \$1,834,474 (\$917,237 per election x 2 elections) for the August primary and November general elections and in FY21-22 and every four years thereafter, there will be a mandatory increase in local expenditures of \$917,237.
- In years with a Presidential Preference Primary the state will be responsible for such costs; therefore, in FY23-24 and every four years thereafter, there will be an increase in state expenditures of \$917,237.

*\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

## **CERTIFICATION:**

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Bojan Savic, Interim Executive Director

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